



Copia a
Dr. Antonio
Gonzalez

Oficina del Rector
SEP 05 2007

1:23 p.m

Jorge Velez Arocho
University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez
PO Box 9000
Mayaguez, PR 00681-9000

August 29, 2007

Dear President Velez Arocho:

In July, a team from your campus participated in the 2007 Summer Academy, run by the Institute for Higher Education Policy, as part of its work in the Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students (BEAMS) Project. This year's theme was *Cultivating Access and Success for Students of Color: Inspiring Communities of Learners*. Your campus representatives met as a team to strengthen the original plan they had crafted at a previous Summer Academy. They also met with other teams doing similar work, to learn from their experiences and share your institution's own accomplishments in increasing student success.

This year's Academy featured a number of exciting sessions to support your team's work including plenaries on the impact of collaborative pedagogy on student success by Vincent Tinto of Syracuse University; creating a student centered institution by Ben Corpus, vice president for Student Development at Baruch College, CUNY, and Estela Lopez, former vice chancellor for Academic Affairs at Connecticut State University; measuring student success by Clifford Adelman, senior associate at IHEP and Carrie Billy, deputy director of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium; and on integrating and sustaining campus success efforts by Steven Crow, president of North Central's Higher Learning Commission and James C. Renick, senior vice president for Programs and Research at ACE.

Both the Summer Academy and BEAMS are managed by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). In addition to BEAMS, IHEP also manages the National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN) and the Model Replication Institutions (MRI) program. Teams from both programs attended the Summer Academy, and had fruitful interactions with BEAMS teams. Together, they explored the role of transfer and articulation and how best to serve today's more mobile students. They also networked with teams working to increase the number of minorities in the STEM fields. In all, we believe this year's Academy was a particularly rich opportunity for participating teams to further their BEAMS goals while setting the stage for collaboration with other teams and projects.

We are very pleased with the richness of this Academy and its promising outcomes. You and your campus should also be proud of the work your team completed during the Summer Academy. We urge you to help sustain their momentum as they return to campus by providing your personal support. It has been demonstrated that presidential support is a facilitator for continued success in this type of work. You can provide a great encouragement for the faculty,



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administrators, and students on your campus who are working hard to increase student learning and success. Your talking about and disseminating the good work of your team will be significant contributions to the BEAMS project as your team continues to build buy-in for their work.

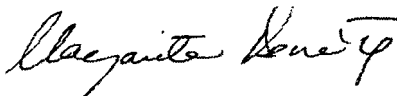
Throughout this last semester of BEAMS funding we are offering two main ways to support your team's work, in addition to continued communication with project staff and consultants. We will be providing travel grants for interested teams to visit another BEAMS institution in order to observe structures or practices to aid their own work, or work with other teams that are undertaking similar projects. We are also providing funding for consultants to conduct a second visit to institutions that would like an additional opportunity to strengthen and enhance project implementation. These funds will be available on a first come basis, so we ask that you act promptly to encourage your team to take advantage of these opportunities.

During the rest of this year BEAMS staff will also be disseminating information on the BEAMS project, highlighting the work that the institutions have engaged in. There will be a publication in November that details the BEAMS process, short term successes already experienced, and case studies of some of the BEAMS institutions. Practice briefs will also be disseminated focusing on some of the major thematic work and best practices that came out of the BEAMS project. Institutional teams will be notified when these pieces are available so that they can be utilized as the work continues on your campus.

Please let us know if you think of additional ways we can support your institution's BEAMS work as the project draws to a close.

We look forward to our continued work together, and we congratulate you on the work of your team.

Sincerely,



Margarita Benitez
Project Director, BEAMS



Lacey Leegwater
Senior Manager for Programs and
Policy



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